

## LFYC Water Fact Sheet

- LFYC water is tested weekly. **The water is safe and has passed all recreational water tests.**
- There have been cases of "Swimmer's Itch". 30-40% of the population can have an allergic reaction. This is a natural occurrence that happens in lakes around the world.
- We have had 2 treatments of copper sulfate to reduce algae and to eradicate the snails. We have reduced the snail population.
- We are maintaining the swim curtains and bubblers to continue the flow of water and removing visible snails.



### **What is Swimmer's Itch?**

Swimmer's itch is a skin rash and is a patchy red pinpoint, which appears on the body after it has been in water. It is not severe and disappears after some time without any treatment. The itching starts within 48 hours and can last till about 7 days. Rarely, it is serious. It is also known as cercarial dermatitis.

### **Cause of Swimmer's Itch**

Swimmer's itch is due to trematode parasites of aquatic and migrating birds. The life cycle of such parasites contact snails as the initial host and aquatic birds or some other type of mammal as the final host. Amphibious, (which move both on water and land) or aquatic snails let out the larval parasite known as "cercaria". This causes dermatitis when it unexpectedly penetrates the skin rather than its rightful host, perhaps a duck. **Your body's immune system detects the cercaria as a foreign protein, attacks and kills it shortly after it penetrates your skin.** Swimmers' itch occurs in marine coastal environments as well as freshwater. Swimmers itch infection is also caused due to common grackles, ducks, geese, red-winged blackbirds, swans, muskrats and moles.

### **Home Remedies for Swimmer' Itch**

One should wash the body with salt water, methyl alcohol, acetic acid (vinegar) or dilute household ammonia. One can use Benadryl spray all over the body to reduce the pain and itch. Towel-dry as soon as the swimming is over. Cold compresses can be used. One can bathe with colloidal oatmeal or baking soda. One can apply baking soda paste to the affected areas. One can wash the affected areas with isopropyl alcohol and coat them with calamine lotion. Cortaid works well also. One need not worry about swimmers itch. In case, it is mild, then treatment is not required. Only in severe cases, a physician has to be consulted. One needs not to give up swimming. Only one should be careful.

### **Additional Prevention & Precautions:**

- **DO NOT** FEED the ducks or geese.
- Shower after swimming.
- Towel-dry after coming out of the water.

**If you have a reaction to the water, please contact Ray Calogero at 973-432-4112.**

### **Resources:**

<http://www.deq.state.mi.us/documents/deq-water-illm-itcbrochure.pdf>;

<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/factsheets/swimmersitch.htm>;

[http://www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/communicable/swimmers\\_itch/fact\\_sheet.htm](http://www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/communicable/swimmers_itch/fact_sheet.htm)

Figure 1. Summary of the Life Cycle of the Causative Agents of Swimmer's Itch

